

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9422

INFO AMCONSUL CEBU

UNCLAS MANILA 12950

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC (PHILIPPINE EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI)

SUBJ: W/W AMERICAN NATIONALS IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

REF: STATE 210051

1. EMBASSY APPRECIATES DEPARTMENT'S CONCERN FOR MINIMIZING WORKLOAD HERE. CHECKING INDIVIDUAL WELFARE AND WHEREABOUTS INQUIRIES IN MINDANAO AREA IS DIFFICULT AT ANY TIME, BUT PROBABLY IS NOT THAT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT NOW. THUS, WE SEE NO REASON TO HOLD UP LISTS OF PERSONS SOUGHT ANY LONGER. PLEASE INCLUDE AMCONSUL CEBU AS ADDRESSEE ON ALL COMMUNICATIONS. WHEN LIST RECEIVED, WE WILL BREAK IT DOWN GEOGRAPHICALLY AND PROCEED TO CONTACT MAYORS AND OTHER AUTHORITIES IN AREA.

2. GENERAL INFORMATION THAT MIGHT BE GIVEN TO INQUIRERS IS THAT MAJOR DAMAGE AND CASUALTIES OCCURRED IN SOUTHERN AND WESTERN MINDANAO AROUND MORO GULF WHERE FORCE OF TIDAL WAVE CONCENTRATED. SULU ARCHIPELAGO HAD MINIMAL DAMAGE. QUAKE DAMAGE WAS APPARENTLY NEGLIGIBLE IN NORTHERN MINDANAO AND NONEXISTENT IN VISAYAS. STATESIDE PRESS REPORTS SEEM TO SAY SIMPLY "SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES" SO THERE ARE INQUIRIES ABOUT CEBU, ILOILO AND OTHER AREAS FAR FROM QUAKE AREA. GREAT MAJORITY OF CASUALTIES WERE SUFFERED IN IMMEDIATE COASTAL AREA, WITHIN FEW HUNDRED YARDS OF SHORELINE. THERE PROBABLY WERE VERY FEW AMERICANS RESIDING IMMEDIATELY ALONG SHORELINE. THERE WAS ADDITIONAL MAJOR DAMAGE AND CASUALTIES FROM COLLAPSED

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BUILDINGS REPORTED IN COTABATO CITY AND PAGADIAN.

3. ALL COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES ARE OPERATING, BOTH INTO AND OUT OF AREA. COMMERCIAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO ALL. COMMERCIAL AIR TRAVEL IS NORMAL AND ALL PRINCIPAL HIGHWAYS ARE OPEN.

4. WITH RESPECT TO YOUR RUMORS OF MISSING AMERICAN MISSIONARIES, NONE OF OUR CONTACTS HAS HEARD THOSE STORIES. BOTH AMCONSUL CEBU AND EMBASSY MANILA HAVE CONTACTED MANY OF MISSIONARY GROUPS WITH PEOPLE IN AFFECTED AREA, BOTH THRU HEAD OFFICES IN MANILA AND CEBU AND THROUGH REPRESENTATIVES ON SCENE. NONE KNOW OF ANY AMERICANS MISSING OR CASUALTIES. CONTACTS WITH NUMEROUS AMERICAN BUSINESSES WITH PEOPLE IN AREA ALSO GIVE COMPLETELY NEGATIVE RESULTS.

5. WITH RESPECT TO LOCATING MISSING FILIPINOS, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT INDIVIDUAL MAYORS OF CITIES ARE BEST SOURCE. GOP DOES NOT RPT NOT HAVE CENTRAL REGISTER OF CASUALTIES. PHIL. EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON WOULD APPEAR TO BE PROPER POINT OF REFERENCE.
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